

AUTUMN 2009

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

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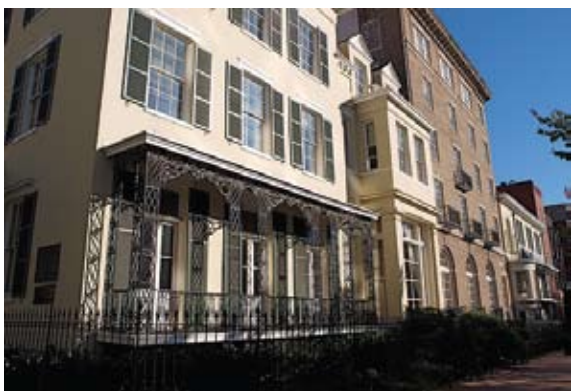
"Voices of Lafayette Park"
Returns in October

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A Holiday Tradition
"Goes Green"

White House Visitor Center
1450 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC
www.nps.gov/whho

"Voices of Lafayette Park" Returns in October



Join the National Park Service every Friday evening in October at 6:00 p.m. as "Voices of Lafayette Park" returns to the North side of the White House. During this one hour program, you will encounter park rangers and volunteers representing 200 years of Lafayette History. Lafayette Park has served as the common meeting ground for many and could be called the center of the political history of the nation.

Planned by architect Charles Bulfinch and named for the first foreign guest of state to stay at the White House, General Marquis de Lafayette, it was originally named Lafayette Square and was once a prime residential address. Vice Presidents, members of Congress and foreign ambassadors came and went from the houses on the square, as well as former

First Lady Dolley Madison and Naval hero Stephen Decatur. Frederick Douglass came to work here as a director of the Freedman's Bank, which stood on the plot now occupied by the Treasury Annex. The echo of these legendary characters, and others who helped lead America to greatness, lingers in this renowned and beautiful corner of President's Park.

Join us for the interpretive program, "Voices of Lafayette Park," which will be held on every Friday in October at 6:00 p.m. Meet at the southeast corner of Lafayette Park at Lafayette's statue.

Second Division Memorial Honors Fallen Soldiers

The Second Division Memorial, located in the southwest corner of the White House in President's Park on the Ellipse, honors the 17,660 men who lost their lives in the service of the Second Division of the United States Army during World War I, World War II, and the Korean War.

Dedicated on July 18, 1936, the memorial was originally built to commemorate the division's casualties in World War I. Later, two wings were dedicated on June 20, 1962, with significant battles of World War II inscribed on the west and of the Korean War on the east.

Composed of an 18-foot-high sculpture of a hand grasping a flaming sword that guards an architectural frame of pink granite built in the form of a great open doorway, the memorial evokes the strength and sacrifice of the war dead. The gilded sword, with an embossed Second Division insignia, an Indian head within a star upon a shield, on its handle (or hilt), dominates the design and symbolizes the Second Division's actions in halting the German advance into Paris in 1918. Two wreaths carved in relief flank the entrance, with the names of the battles that the Second Division participated in during the three wars written in gold leaf on the granite panels surrounding the gateway.



Tree Lighting Continues a Long Tradition on the Ellipse

The lighting of the National Christmas Tree on the Ellipse is a Washington tradition during the holiday season. After the annual lighting in early December through January 1, 2009, visitors will have a one-of-a-kind opportunity to enjoy the National Christmas tree, smaller trees representing all fifty states, the District of Columbia and the five U.S. territories, an installation of model trains

and the warmth of the Yule Log. Additionally, on evenings through December 23, visitors will be treated to sounds of the holidays as musical groups from across the region perform on the outdoor stage in the Ellipse area. The site will be open daily from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

The tradition of a tree lighting ceremony in the nation's capital began in 1913, when 20,000 onlookers witnessed the lighting of the first Washington Community Christmas tree on the East Plaza of the Capitol. A decade later, on Christmas Eve 1923, President Calvin Coolidge lit the first National Christmas tree on the Ellipse, a sixty foot evergreen from his home state of Vermont. Today's National Christmas Tree was transplanted from Pennsylvania in 1978. The live, almost 42-foot-tall Colorado blue spruce grows on the Ellipse, just south of the White House.

SPECIAL FAMILY ACTIVITIES AT THE VISITOR CENTER

ASK A PARK RANGER



Fall Garden Tours

Over the years, the eighteen acres that comprise the White House grounds have been subject to constant change. From the earliest residents to the most recent, many First Families have influenced the landscaping and gardens surrounding the White House. Explore the beauty and history of the White House garden for yourself! Each fall, visitors receive a special opportunity to visit the grounds surrounding the White House. *Fall garden tours will be offered on Saturday, October 17 between 10:00 a.m. and 4 p.m. and Sunday, October 18 between 10:00 a.m. and 3 p.m. Free same-day, timed tickets can be obtained at the Ellipse Visitor Pavilion at 15th and E Streets, NW.*

November Kids Korner

On Wednesday, November 11 between 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., the Visitor Center will host a crafts event to celebrate Veteran's Day. Activities will be available for children of all ages to honor American veterans, including those patriots memorialized in President's Park. *No reservations required.*

Holiday Crafts – Past and Present

On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, December 1 - 22, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., free holiday craft programs will be available for all youngsters at the Visitor Center. Stud cloves into oranges, roll a candle, create a holiday card, mix mulling spices, blend herbs for holiday sachets and learn about Abraham Lincoln's favorite cookies! *Call the Visitor Center in December for the daily activity schedule. Registration is required at the Information Desk on the day of the event.*



National Christmas Tree Talks

The National Christmas tree, on the grounds of the Ellipse, south of the White House, is a live, almost 42-foot-tall Colorado Blue Spruce. The tree was transplanted from York, Pennsylvania, in 1978. Join NPS rangers daily, December 4 - 31 at 12:30 p.m., for a 30 minute interpretative talk on the National Christmas Tree. *Meet the National Park Service ranger at the National Christmas Tree on the Ellipse. No reservations required.*

Beacon of Hope

Catch the holiday spirit with "Beacon of Hope," a special holiday interpretive program highlighting the history of the National Christmas Tree. Peggy Eisenhauer, a volunteer at President's Park, will conduct the half-hour program, which will take place in the Visitor Center at 12:30 p.m. on Fridays, December 4, 11, 18 and Wednesdays, December 23 and 30. *No reservations required.*

Welcome Visitors

Our Park staff is ready, willing and able to answer all your questions. Look for the unique hat every Park Ranger wears. These President's Park employees have a wealth of information and can handle almost all presidential trivia questions, too! Our Park volunteers wear yellow and green baseball hats and also know about what's happening in the area. Brochures and maps can be obtained at the Information Desk in the Visitor Center, as well as at the Ellipse Visitor Pavilion, which also has a bulletin board with up-to-date information.



Talks and Walks

Park rangers and volunteers present interpretive talks daily at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on topics of interest about the White House and President's Park. These talks and walks, posted daily in the Visitor Center, last 20 minutes to one hour, and give you a bird's eye view of President's Park history, as well as people who have lived in the neighborhood, the many events held within the Park, and the monuments and memorials located here.

Calling All Junior Rangers!

National Park Service Junior Rangers are important people because they help park rangers protect and take care of the resources of President's Park, as well as other National Parks. This is a big job because there are 391 areas in the U.S. National Park System! A Junior Ranger also learns about the buildings, objects, plants, animals and history of the National Parks, and shares that knowledge with their friends and family. *Take part in the President's Park Junior Ranger Program by asking for a Junior Ranger activity booklet at the Information Desk in the Visitor Center.*

On this date: November 1, 1800

President John Adams moved into the newly constructed White House, becoming the first president to take up residence in the building. On his second night in the White House, he wrote to his wife Abigail, "I Pray Heaven to Bestow the Best of Blessings on THIS HOUSE and all that shall hereafter Inhabit it. May none but Honest and Wise Men ever rule under this Roof." His words were later carved into the mantel of the State Dining Room.



Experience Your America

Programs may change due to reassignment of rangers to other duties that serve the mission of the National Park Service. Every effort is made to maintain the schedule as printed. Please contact the Visitor Center at (202) 208-1631 to confirm programs and dates. The Center is open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, e-mail us at whho_presidents_park@nps.gov.

This calendar is sponsored by the National Park Service and the White House Historical Association.